



## BREXIT FUNDING AND SUPPORT OPTIONS

### 1. BREXIT BUSINESS LOAN

SME businesses which are dealing with the impacts of BREXIT, whether suffering a drop in turnover of 15% or more, or just unable to secure additional finance from their bank or lenders - then the **BREXIT Business Loan** via **Microfinance Ireland** may be the solution !

The **BREXIT Business loan** is a loan finance scheme through **Microfinance Ireland (MFI)**, which is available to support small businesses through the initial period of BREXIT - **with the aim to protect businesses and jobs in Ireland.**

Eligible businesses for the BREXIT Business loan include the following:

1. any business including Sole Traders, Partnerships and Limited Companies with less than 10 employees and annual turnover of **up to €2m**
2. where the turnover of the business has already been, or potentially could be, impacted by BREXIT related issues by a minimum of 15%
3. where the business has a short-term cashflow requirement as a result of BREXIT
4. where the business is unable to secure finance from banks and commercial lending providers

The loans under the scheme are for amounts from **€5,000 to a maximum of €25,000**, and the loans can be used for any short term working capital requirements, or to implement specific business changes that result from BREXIT related issues

The loan periods available are from anything between 6 months up to 3 years, and there are no other loan fees or charges involved in obtaining the loans other than an **interest rate of 5.5% - which can be reduced to 4.5% if applied for via your Local Enterprise Office (LEO)**

The loan scheme was originally due to run until 31st March 2021 but is now available until 31st December 2021.

- <https://microfinanceireland.ie/loan-packages-2/brexit/>

### 2. FUTURE GROWTH LOAN SCHEME

The **Future Growth Loan Scheme** is a loan finance scheme set up in June 2019 with the aim of providing support to companies with challenges resulting from BREXIT. It is a Government backed scheme that is managed through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI).

It's open to (viable) micro, small and medium SMEs and small **'mid-cap'** businesses in the agriculture (farmers and food businesses) and seafood sectors to support long-term strategic investment.

The loans under the scheme are from **€25,000 to €3m** for each eligible business, and the loans can be used for primarily for -

1. Investment in tangible or intangible assets to increase productivity and/or efficiency, set up a new establishment or extend an existing one.
2. Diversification into new products or a change in a production process.
3. Investment in tangible or intangible assets for process and organisational innovation.
4. Investment in connection with the processing and marketing of agricultural products.



The loan periods are typically from **8 to 10 years** with interest rates **initially 'capped' at 3.5% for loans to €250,000 and 4.5% for loans above €250,000 for the first 6 months** – rates after that are at higher rates at more commercial levels.

Loans under this scheme are now **mainly available** only via KBC Bank and Close Brothers for eligible businesses.

### 3. READY FOR CUSTOMS GRANT

The grant is a €20m fund, administered by Enterprise Ireland, which is focused on assisting Irish businesses to meet the challenge(s) of preparing for managing the customs process after BREXIT.

It provides eligible businesses with financial assistance to cover the costs of taking on additional customs clearance staff after 1st January 2021.

The key aspects of the '**Ready for Customs**' grant include:

- up to €9,000 available for each new **full-time employee** engaged in customs work
- up to €4,500 available for each new **part time employee** engaged in customs work
- the grant can be used towards recruitment costs, employee costs and provision of IT infrastructure, where necessary

Additionally, where an existing employee has been redeployed within the business to manage the customs work, then '**back filling**' the position vacated, is to be expected and can be claimed under the terms of the grant.

Although the '**Ready for Customs**' grant scheme **opened in September 2020 and was originally expected to close by the end of December 2020**, there is still some funding available to SMEs under the scheme !

### 4. INTERTRADE IRELAND BREXIT VOUCHER

Under this scheme, InterTrade Ireland provides up to €2,250 for professional advice from an approved service provider panel to businesses concerning Brexit, including the movement of goods, services and labour and currency exchange.

**The scheme is open to businesses on the island of Ireland that trade with Ireland or Northern Ireland. Companies must have less than 250 employees and less than €50m annual turnover.**

### 5. LOCAL ENTERPRISE GRANTS

Although the support available from your Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) is specifically related to BREXIT challenges, there are grants which are ongoing, but may be options for supporting qualifying businesses and startup's in this post BREXIT landscape.

See the following grants -

- **Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters** – for companies with 10 or fewer employees to help them explore and develop new market opportunities
- **Priming Grants** – for businesses trading for less than 18 months
- **Business Expansion Grants** – for businesses trading for more than 18 months
- **Feasibility Study Grants** – to cover costs of researching a business idea.